

## Message Text

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ACTION ACDA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDE-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00  
NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 INR-07 L-03  
PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 H-01 ERDA-05  
NRC-05 ERDE-00 /068 W  
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O P 091059Z SEP 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1284  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY  
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE PRIORITY  
USNMR SHAPE PRIORITY  
CINC EUR VAHINGEN PRIORITY  
JCS WASHDC PRIORITY  
CSA WASHDC PRIORITY  
CNO WASHDC PRIORITY  
CSAF WASHDC PRIORITY  
DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: PARM, MNUC, GW  
SUBJECT: SEPTEMBER 8 BUNDESTAG DEBATE: NEUTRON WARHEAD

REF: BONN 14529

BEGIN SUMMARY: THE SEPTEMBER 8 PUBLIC BUNDESTAG DEBATE  
ON ENHANCED RADIATION WARHEAD WAS UNEMOTIONAL. SPD  
SPEAKERS TENDED TO TAKE CAUTIOUS, ANALYTICAL APPROACH.  
MOD LEBER SAID IT REMAINED TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE WAR-  
HEAD WOULD BE OF VALUE FOR THE ALLIANCE, BUT HE BALANCED  
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THIS WITH SOME POSITIVE COMMENTS ON THE WEAPON AND ON  
CONSULTATION THUS FAR WITH THE USG. THE FDP WAS BASIC-  
ALLY POSITIVE, BUT STILL RESERVED ITS POSITION. CDU  
SPEAKERS GENERALLY FAVORED THE WARHEAD, AND UNDERScoreD  
ITS LIKELY ADVANTAGES. END SUMMARY.

1. MOD LEBER SAID: "IT REMAINS TO BE EXAMINED WHETHER

THE NEUTRON WEAPON IS OF VALUE FOR THE ALLIANCE AS A COMPLEMENTARY MEANS OF DETERRENCE STRATEGY, THAT IS TO SAY, AS A MEANS OF PREVENTING WAR". HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE WARHEAD IS A "TYPICAL NUCLEAR WEAPON" AND HE POINTED OUT THAT ALL NUCLEAR WEAPONS INVOLVE NEUTRONS. HOWEVER, HE SAID "THE NEW NAME (NEUTRON BOMB) FROM AMERICA HAS CAUSED CONFUSION", AND THAT WHEN THE NAME FIRST APPEARED IN JUNE IT WAS NEW TO HIM. HOWEVER, HE SAID HE WISHED TO EMPHASIZE THAT "REPRESENTATIVES OF THE US HAVE KEPT US CONTINUOUSLY INFORMED IN ALL PHASES, IN NATO AS WELL AS BILATERALLY". HE HAD NO DOUBT THAT THE UNITED STATES WOULD INTENSIVELY DISCUSS WITH ITS ALLIES ALL ASPECTS OF THE QUESTION, INCLUDING THE SPECIAL INTERESTS OF THE FRG. HE SAID THAT IN FACT SUCH DISCUSSIONS WERE "ALREADY UNDERWAY".

2. LEBER SAID THE WARHEAD WOULD NOT OBSCURE THE BORDER-LINE BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS (I.E., LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD). THE DECISION ON USE WOULD REMAIN WITH THE US PRESIDENT, AND THIS DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN "SAFEGUARDING THE INTERESTS OF THE AFFECTED ALLIES AND FOLLOWING APPROPRIATE CONSULTATIONS". FORWARD DEFENSE WOULD REMAIN A CORNERSTONE OF ALLIANCE STRATEGY.

3. LEBER SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT WISH PUBLICLY TO DISCUSS FURTHER DETAILS AT THIS TIME, GIVEN THE "UNIQUE NATURE OF THE SUBJECT" AND THE FACT THAT "INTERESTS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE ALLIES" WERE INVOLVED.

4. IN AN INDIRECT REFERENCE TO BOTH THE NEUTRON WARHEAD AND EGON BAHR'S CRITICISM OF IT, LEBER SAID THAT ALL WEAPONS ARE "EQUALLY INHUMAN".

5. SPD BUNDESTAG MEMBER CONRAD AHLERS ALSO TOOK A CAUTIOUS APPROACH TOWARD THE WARHEAD. HE SAID THAT, ON THE ONE HAND, IT COULD STRENGTHEN DETERRENCE. ON THE OTHER HAND, IF DETERRENCE FAILED, THE WARHEAD MIGHT

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NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 INR-07 L-03  
PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 TRSE-00 H-01 ERDA-05  
ERDE-00 NRC-05 /068 W  
-----027885 091127Z /15

O P 091059Z SEP 77  
FM AMEMBASSY BONN  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1285  
INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
USMISSION NATO IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY  
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DIA WASHDC PRIORITY

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LEAD TO A LOWERING OF THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD. THE POSSI-  
BILITY OF SUCH A LOWERING WOULD HAVE TO BE AVOIDED  
THROUGH A GERMAN-AMERICAN UNDERSTANDING.

6. JUERGEN MOELLEMANN, FDP BUNDESTAG MEMBER AND DEFENSE  
SPOKESMAN, SAID HIS PARTY WAS LEANING IN A POSITIVE  
DIRECTION REGARDING THE WARHEAD. HE SAID REGULAR  
TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARE SO POWERFUL THAT THEY  
MIGHT DESTROY WHAT SHOULD IN FACT BE DEFENDED. BECAUSE  
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THE NEUTRON WARHEAD CAN BE AIMED MORE PRECISELY AT THE  
AGGRESSOR THUS SPARING MUCH OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION,  
IT "COULD COMPENSATE FOR THE WEAKNESS IN CONVENTIONAL  
WEAPONS WITHOUT DESTROYING WHAT SHOULD BE DEFENDED".  
THEREFORE, "DEFENSE - AND WITH IT DETERRENCE - COULD  
BECOME CONSIDERABLY MORE CREDIBLE AND THE RELATIONSHIP  
IN CENTRAL EUROPE MORE STABLE".

7. HOWEVER, MOELLEMANN CAUTIONED THAT THERE WERE MANY

QUESTIONS ON WHICH OPINION IN GERMANY WAS DIVIDED. SOME FELT THE BOMB WOULD OBSCURE THE BORDERLINE BETWEEN CONVENTIONAL AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS. SOME SAW A CERTAIN DANGER OF DECOUPLING OF THE TACTICAL FROM THE STRATEGIC DETERRENT, GIVING THE UNITED STATES THE CHANCE TO BE A SANCTUARY IN A NUCLEAR CONFRONTATION. HE SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE ANY RESPONSIBLE AMERICAN ENVISIONED THIS.

8. MOELLEMANN SAID THAT ANYONE WHO EMOTIONALIZES THE NEUTRON WARHEAD DISCUSSION (A CLEAR REFERENCE TO EGON BAHR) SHOULD REALIZE THAT HE IS DOING DAMAGE TO THE CAUSE OF PEACE, BECAUSE HE IS ATTACKING A WEAPON WHICH "ALONG WITH ITS DANGERS, BRINGS WITH IT GREAT CHANCES FOR PEACE". MOELLEMANN SAID HIS PARTY INTENDED TO CARRY THE DECISION MAKING PROCESS ON THE WARHEAD TO ITS CONCLUSION IN ALL SOBERNESS.

9. MANFRED WOERNER, CDU/CSU BUNDESTAG MEMBER AND CHAIRMAN OF THE BUNDESTAG DEFENSE COMMITTEE, TOOK A CLEARLY POSITIVE POSITION TOWARD THE WARHEAD. HE SAID THE MORE DIFFERENTIATED AND THE MORE FLEXIBLE A SPECTRUM OF TACTICAL NUCLEAR WEAPONS IS, THE GREATER THE HOPE OF DETERRING THE WARSAW PACT FROM ATTACK AND ENSURING THE PEACE. "IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT", HE SAID, "THAT THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NEUTRON WEAPON MUST BE SEEN..." WOERNER REJECTED THE THESIS THAT THE WARHEAD WOULD MAKE WAR MORE LIKELY. HE DECLARED: "PRECISELY BECAUSE THIS WEAPON REDUCES COLLATERAL DAMAGE FOR THE CIVILIAN POPULATION, ITS USE IS MORE CREDIBLE, THE RISK FOR THE WARSAW PACT IS GREATER, AND THEREFORE DETERRENCE IS MORE EFFECTIVE". HE SAID THAT, IN THIS CONTEXT, MOSCOW'S WORLDWIDE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE WEAPON "SPEAKS VOLUMES".

10. WOERNER DISAGREED WITH THE ARGUMENT THAT THE WARHEAD WOULD LOWER THE NUCLEAR THRESHOLD. THE US PRESIDENT WOULD RETAIN COMPLETE CONTROL OVER ITS USE AND IT WAS, AFTER ALL, A NUCLEAR WEAPON.

11. WOERNER WAS HIGHLY CRITICAL OF EGON BAHR FOR HAVING SAID "SO MANY CONFUSING AND INACCURATE THINGS" ABOUT THE WARHEAD. SINCE THE NEUTRON WARHEAD WOULD KILL FEWER PEOPLE THAN A REGULAR ONE, REALITY WAS "EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE" OF THE WAY BAHR HAD PRESENTED IT.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**TAGS:** PARM, MNUC, GE  
**To:** STATE  
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